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INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1178
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8176
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 6394
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4610
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2446
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 4566
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3672
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 8824
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 6209
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO 0793
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3057
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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001106

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/29/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ELAB](#) [MV](#)

SUBJECT: MALDIVES: HOME MINISTER QASIM IBRAHIM RESIGNS

REF: A. COLOMBO 1022

[1](#)B. COLOMBO 1006

[1](#)C. COLOMBO 1076

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D' AFFAIRES JAMES R. MOORE REASONS:

1.4(b,d).

[1](#)1. (U) SUMMARY: Home Minister Qasim Ibrahim has resigned following a police brutality scandal at a five-star resort. Qasim's Republican Party has not decided on its continued participation in the MDP-led government. Upcoming Parliamentary elections in February will determine the extent to which President Nasheed will have to rely on coalition parties to rule. End Summary

[1](#)2. (U) Home Minister Qasim Ibrahim resigned on December 3 following a police brutality scandal at a five-star resort. On November 30, under orders from the Home Minister, police in riot gear broke up a strike by employees demanding higher pay at the five-star One and Only Reethi Rah resort. Resort staff and labor leaders were quoted in the press accusing the police of beatings and excessive force. The scandal was unwelcome news for the new government led by former opposition figures, many of whom had been the victims of police brutality in the past. Qasim acknowledged that he ordered the police to break up the protest, but in his public statement announcing the resignation he cited the new government's failure to fund improvements in the country's prisons as the reason he was leaving the Ministry. To our knowledge there have been no discussions over who might replace him.

[1](#)3. (C) Qasim, one of the wealthiest men in the Maldives and a former Finance Minister, heads the Republican Coalition made up of the Republican Party, the Adhaalath Party and the Maldives National Congress. Following his defeat in the first round of the Presidential elections, he pledged his support to the MDP candidate and eventual victor Mohammed Nasheed. In return, the Republican Coalition was granted four of the 14 ministries in the new government's cabinet. The Republican Party met on the night of December 3 to discuss their continued participation in the MDP-led coalition government. According to Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ahmed Naseem, a key MDP figure, no decision

was taken on their future cooperation with the MDP. Naseem reported that he had been in touch with leaders in the religious Adhaalath Party and they were not in favor of leaving the government. Naseem indicated it was still too early to assess what Qasim's departure would mean for continued MDP-Republican party cooperation.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: The cabinet is a "loose coalition" of former opposition parties that has initially struggled to gel (ref B). Qasim's departure is an unwelcome distraction for the new government as it struggles to solve a serious budget shortfall (ref C). However, the MDP and Republican Party had agreed to contest the coming Parliamentary elections in February separately. While near term MDP-Republican Party cooperation is in jeopardy, President Nasheed's long-term need to depend on coalition partners will be determined by the results in February.
Moore